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## Vikings across the Atlantic: Emigration and the Building of a Greater Norway, 1860-1945

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stores often, their purchases usually—but not always—appearing in their husbands' names. In Nacogdoches, Texas, women patronized one store in significant numbers, and female hotel owners had their own substantial accounts. In most areas, though, their presence in store records was much more marginal. Both African Americans and American Indians frequented stores. While owners enjoyed their business, racial divisions still existed. Many merchants noted the race of their customers in their ledgers. Economic integration did not preclude racial discrimination, but race-based pricing does not seem to have existed, English argues. Black customers invested in the education of their children, she found, often buying spelling and reading books. Another useful chapter on German immigrants in Texas shows how they retained many cultural traditions while taking part in the local economy. During the Christmas holiday, Germans bought candy, apples, and toys. Consumption patterns, English concludes, were tied to the rural agrarian economy. Nationwide prejudices and discrimination influenced the region, but women and minority groups still took part in the local commercial economy and played important roles as consumers.

This innovative study will be useful for those interested in the Gilded Age or in local or community history. Although the population of Iowa was less diverse than that of Oklahoma or Texas, the same processes of economic integration and consumption occurred in this state as railroads tied rural regions to the growing industrial economy. The focus and methodology of this study could provide a framework for a similar study of late nineteenth-century Iowa.

*Vikings across the Atlantic: Emigration and the Building of a Greater Norway, 1860–1945*, by Daron W. Olson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. xxi, 296 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Anna M. Peterson is assistant professor of history at Luther College. Her scholarship has focused on Scandinavian women from the 1880s to about 1940.

In this engaging cultural history, Daron W. Olson traces the development of a transnational Norwegian identity from the early days of Norwegian immigration to the United States in the nineteenth century to the liberation of Norway at the end of World War II. During that period, Norwegian immigrants struggled to adapt to a new country and craft an identity that balanced their allegiance to America with their loyalty to Norway. Olson argues that Norwegian Americans' ability to negotiate the requirements of those loyalties relied on their

use of immigrant myths. To make this argument, Olson builds on and expands Orm Øverland's concept of immigrant homemaking myths and details a myth-making process that evolved from myths of sacrifice and origins to hegemony myths and legacy myths. Olson finds that the use of those myths was contingent on developments in both Norway and the United States and ultimately culminated in the concept of a greater Norway in the interwar period. In Olson's estimation, those myths contributed to the creation of a Norwegian identity that, though imagined, was real in the sense that many were willing to sacrifice their lives to protect it. On this point, Olson's argument could benefit from a larger discussion of the Norwegian Americans who fought in the Civil War and World War II.

One of Olson's greatest contributions is his examination of the role Norway and homeland Norwegians played both in the construction of Norwegian American ethnicity and in the creation of a transnational Norwegian identity. His book thus contributes to recent work on the study of immigration in relation to both the host and home societies. Olson finds that Norwegian Americans not only nurtured connections to the homeland, but that Norwegians also actively participated in and reacted to the creation of Norwegian American ethnicities. This was bolstered by the fact that Norway was a new nation; it had gained independence from Sweden in 1905. According to Olson, a fervent Norwegian nationalist movement worked to construct a Norwegian identity at the same time as Norwegian Americans struggled to craft an identity of their own. The result was Norway's relatively eager adoption of a transnational Norwegian identity. In fact, Olson argues that, during the first decades of the twentieth century, Norwegian professional and business elites cultivated the concept of "a greater Norway" to encompass both homeland Norwegians and people of Norwegian descent who lived outside Norway's borders. Olson credits this with their desire to tie Norway to the politically powerful United States during the tumultuous interwar period.

Olson's compelling argument about the intersection of Norwegian nationalism and the construction of Norwegian American ethnicity relies primarily on the study of media accounts, literature, and commemorative and celebratory events, such as annual 17th of May celebrations. Olson nicely balances Norwegian and American source material in order to demonstrate the building of a transatlantic Norwegian identity. His examples include an interesting study of the construction of commemorative structures in Norway and the United States: Norwegian Americans raised monuments in honor of Norway, including statues of Leif Erikson, Henrik Ibsen and Ole Bull; and Nor-

wegians erected statues of Norwegian American heroes such as Colonel Hans Christian Heg. According to Olson, commemorative activities such as these served to strengthen ties and bolster a common national identity between Norwegian Americans and homeland Norwegians.

Olson details the macro-process of identity formation through a source base that is grounded in the rich and often complicated interactions that took place in local communities. The vast majority of Norwegian immigrants settled in the upper Midwest, so it is not surprising that this is where the bulk of Olson's story unfolds. As a result, the history of the upper Midwest is an important backdrop to Olson's larger story about the construction of transnational identity. Readers are introduced to the struggle over identity that took place among Norwegian Americans in urban areas such as Minneapolis and Chicago as well as in rural environs such as the Red River Valley in Minnesota and North Dakota, the Fox River settlement in Illinois, and Decorah, Iowa. A real strength of the book is its attention to the tensions between urban and rural Norwegian Americans.

*Vikings across the Atlantic* makes a compelling contribution to studies of Norwegian American immigration and Norwegian nationalism. The book also speaks to larger debates about migration, transnationalism, identity, and ethnicity and can inspire thoughtful discussion of these topics beyond the particulars of the Norwegian/Norwegian American case.

*Hell of a Vision: Regionalism and the Modern American West*, by Robert L. Dorman. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012. xi, 256 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Edward Watts is professor of English at Michigan State University. His books include *An American Colony: Regionalism and the Roots of Midwestern Culture* (2002).

Early in his introduction to this intriguing book, Robert Dorman sets forth a three-pronged working definition of *regionalism*: "the spatial conceptualization of a region, which can be represented by a map but also by visual art and narrative description; the identity of a region, that is, its qualities and characteristics; and self-identification, or the feeling that one is a native, inhabitant, or otherwise has special ties to a particular region. All of the dimensions of regionalism contribute to that amorphous yet concrete experience known as *the sense of place*" (3). While this definition is itself somewhat amorphous, it is deliber-